

Ep 149: Wines of Austria with Amelia Singer, Wine Educator and Communicator (Part 1)



Janina Doyle 00:00:07 Welcome to Eat Sleep Wine Repeat, a podcast for all you wine lovers, who, if you're like me, just cannot get enough of the good stuff. I'm Janina Doyle, your host, Brand Ambassador, Wine Educator, and Sommelier. So, stick with me as we dive deeper into this ever evolving, wonderful world of wine and wherever you are listening to this, cheers to you!

Janina Doyle 00:00:31 Hello wine lovers. So welcome back to another episode. Today we're going to be touching on Austria, the Wines of Austria. And I have a fantastic guest who is gonna shed some light on her own personal experiences and journey and connection to Austrian wine. We have Amelia Singer on the podcast today. So, some of you may already know her. She's a fantastic wine communicator and educator. You may have seen her as the TV presenter on the Wine Show. You may have seen her as the wine guru on Jamie Oliver's drink Tube Channel. She's written for Waitrose and Partners in their food magazine. So, she has been around for quite some time and it's just a fantastic conversation. She is someone with beautiful energy and I know that you're gonna enjoy this conversation. So, we will be talking about Zweigelt, Blaufränkisch, Sankt Laurent, which actually is how you're supposed to pronounce the grape variety, not 'Saint Laurent'. And these are the three red grape varieties, the main ones. Of course, we will be talking about Grüner Veltliner, the white grape, the number one grape variety of Austria. And I just hope you enjoy this podcast as much as I have recording it. And that afterwards, you want to delve deeper into its history, the regions and its flavours. So, grab yourself a bottle of Austrian wine. I'm drinking a Grüner Veltliner in this episode and that is from Wickham's Wine (<https://wickhamwine.co.uk/>), which is my incredible sponsor of this season. So, if in doubt, you know exactly where you can get a bottle. So, get that schnitzel in the pan, put yourself that glass of Grüner and enjoy the episode.

Janina Doyle 00:02:27 Okay, Amelia, we're not faffing around here. This is super serious. It's not about fun. We're doing, what did you ask for? You wanted to cheers straight away with wine.

Amelia Singer 00:02:34 Yes. With Austrian wine. Yes.

Janina Doyle 00:02:37 Yes, with Austrian wine. Okay, so cheers.

Amelia Singer 00:02:39 Cheers. Yay.

Janina Doyle 00:02:40 Yeah, but okay.

Amelia Singer 00:02:42 Próst! Próst!

Janina Doyle 00:02:43 Próst! But yeah, but we've got nothing to clink it with like

Amelia Singer 00:02:45 No clinking a computer screen is not quite same..

Janina Doyle 00:02:49 There you go. That's alright, that'll do. Okay. Why are we doing Austrian wine? It's not Aus, it's not Austrian Wine Day. You're not actually officially Austrian, are you?

Amelia Singer 00:02:58 Well, Austria-Hungarian, I think my grandparents would prefer to say. Maybe identify with that. My dad's parents were from Austria-Hungary when that was a thing.

Janina Doyle 00:03:09 Mm-hmm. When? When that was a thing. When it was in, when it was in fashion.

Amelia Singer 00:03:14 Yeah. I was like, I gloss over thirty decades of really painful personal and international history.

Janina Doyle 00:03:21 Yeah, moving on from that.

Amelia Singer 00:03:23 Moving on. No, I mean it's important to me. I was very much brought up with Austria-Hungarian cooking by my grandparents. My grandfather would've said, he's technically from Hungary. He meant the borders of change. My grandmother was from Rabí in the Czech Republic. We had family in Vienna. My grandmother trained to be an opera singer in Vienna, along with her sister and her mother.

Janina Doyle 00:03:40 Oh I love that!

Amelia Singer 00:03:43 It was like a cultural connection with that part of the world, which has been passed on through our family's love of music and Austrian wine and goulash and paprika chicken.

Janina Doyle 00:03:53 Boom, summed up literally pretty much in one sentence. I love that. So now my question to you and all the people listening, what they wanna know is, have you drunk a decent amount of Austrian wine?

Amelia Singer 00:04:07 I think I have. I think I have. I wanted to caveat this because that does not mean that I've actually done any wine trips there. How I've...

Janina Doyle 00:04:15 Fair enough. Yes.

Amelia Singer 00:04:16 Well, actually I lie. I did go to like the Vienna Wine Fair, which is held, it's, it's amazing. It's like the Austrian wine Fair. It's held in Vienna in the Imperial Palace every other year and it's got hundreds of wineries. And I went with my father last year and that was an amazing father daughter trip where we also managed to pack in lots of cafe trips and getting Sacher-Torte and buying Austrian waist coats from Loden Plankl.

Janina Doyle 00:04:40 Yes, Yes.

Amelia Singer 00:04:41 You know? And then gonna kind of wine taverns, which have been run from family since like the 18th century. We went to Heuriger, I'm gonna butcher this. Heuriger Kierlinger, which is an amazing wine tavern. Great. Do you wanna get ties and cravats, which my father only ever wears. My mother jokes. She's never seen his neck. We had to go to Jungmann, which has been around since the 18th century.

Janina Doyle 00:05:05 Love that.

Amelia Singer 00:05:05 And we also went antique shopping. So, like we basically combined three or four days in Vienna last year tasting so many different Austrian wines. A lot unfortunately, which aren't exported, which is quite frustrating, but like a wonderful, and Brexit doesn't help, quite frankly. And then also mixing it up with the local culture. So that for me is really what wine is about. And, and of course there's our family history as well, but Vienna's an incredible city to visit and it's the largest wine city in the world.

Janina Doyle 00:05:35 Is it?

Amelia Singer 00:05:35 There's 630 wineries dotted around Vienna and you can take the Heuriger express train and go and visit them all.

Janina Doyle 00:05:44 Well, see now..

Amelia Singer 00:05:44 Maybe not all, but.

Janina Doyle 00:05:45 I'm equally the same as you having not actually gone to any of the Austrian regions except for Vienna, which is actually so worth commenting on.

Amelia Singer 00:05:59 It is a region.

Janina Doyle 00:06:01 It is a wine region. And I remember and literally you can walk out of the main city. I say this now, I'm wondering if I took a bus or a taxi, but either way I remember me literally walking through the vineyards and just looking out at the Vienna city. It is amazing. And you talked about those little taverns now I went and everything was shut because it was coming close to winter, I can't remember, but every, like, there were no leaves on the vines, so I'm pretty sure we were getting close to winter. And so of course everything was shut. But these little taverns, don't they, when they're open, it's like they sell their really young wines, right? Like every...

Amelia Singer 00:06:36 Very young Grüner Veltliner, which they tend to put with sparkling water, you know, that's a kind of a light. But then, all's, like these families make very traditional dishes. Lots of them have been running since the 18th century. It's very, very rustic. It's not fancy pants. There's usually lots of singing. 'cause they tend to have, well we went, it must have been in May last year actually, I have been to a wine region. I went to go to the 50th anniversary of Schloss Gobelsburg, which is just outside of Vienna.

Janina Doyle 00:07:07 Isn't that in Kamptal? Am I making that up? Is that in Kamptal? It's, I'm sure it's in Kamptal.

Amelia Singer 00:07:12 Now, I'm getting confused. They make wine all over the place. I'm gonna have to fact check that because...

Janina Doyle 00:07:17 Let's fact check it.

Amelia Singer 00:07:18 Let's fact check it. Because they make wines, with, using various sites around the Langenlois and yeah, around Kamptal, Kremstel.

Janina Doyle 00:07:26 Okay, but I love the fact that you're like, I've not been to a wine region. Oh wait, I have, I love that. You know, there's so many visits to wine regions.

Amelia Singer 00:07:31 But, it's just, we only went literally just an evening. It was an amazing celebration of 850 years of wine making. And I'll get talking about Schloss Gobelsburg later, but um, I'm actually...

Janina Doyle 00:07:41 Talk about it now.

Amelia Singer 00:07:42 Yeah. So actually, I technically have been to Kamptal, but it was for an 850th anniversary at Schloss Gobelsburg. So I, we just went to, well we just went to that winery. We had amazing back vintages and it was complete with Viennese traditional music and it was really, really special. And then the next day it was the wine fair. So, we had three days in Vienna.

Janina Doyle 00:08:03 Now, okay, I need you to tell me about this wine fair. So how many days does it last?

Amelia Singer 00:08:09 So it lasts for about three or four days. And it's in the Imperial Palace, which what I love about Austria is it's very organized, but, they still have a great...

Janina Doyle 00:08:20 Some of the German influence?

Amelia Singer 00:08:22 It's like this wonderful combination of like German influence and also like Italian influence too. And like they can have fun. They actually also really get, have a dark sense of humor. Like, because I've told some comedians from like the Edinburgh Fringe, they're like, oh, if we bring our kind of plays over to Germany, they don't always get it. But if it's a bit zany or dark sense of humor, the Austrians really get it. Which is like, I don't think it's like what people expect. So, I think what I like about the Oscars is they work hard, they're very efficient, but hospitality is hospitality and it's meant to be fun. And when you go, it's like in the Imperial Palace, you're like, how can anyone have hundreds of wineries? All these different masterclasses, all these different stores like from around the country all in one place and like working in the clockwork fashion. And it does. And everything's so well signed. Amazing booklets. They gave us like really fancy pants spittoons, which I love like our personal spittoons, which I loved was amazing.

Janina Doyle 00:09:14 Oh, okay.

Amelia Singer 00:09:15 Yeah, there's amazing food everywhere. Like there's always like incredible bread rolls and local cheeses and cured meats everywhere. So, you don't go hung, I mean they've got it down to a tea at the VieVinum, it's called like yeah, like kind of the Vienna Wine Fair, VieVinum.

Janina Doyle 00:09:29 Amazing. Okay. And obviously the fact that you're saying you and your dad went, you're suggesting though this is not a trade event, this is also open to the public. Everyone listening to this can come?

Amelia Singer 00:09:40 So it's open in the morning to trade. And then the afternoon to the public.

Janina Doyle 00:09:45 Okay, perfect.

Amelia Singer 00:09:46 So yeah, so it's a mix.

Janina Doyle 00:09:49 I love that.

Amelia Singer 00:09:51 And I kind of, I'm naughty. I call my dad my faux CEO, but actually he's great because he speaks perfect German. So, he actually talks to all the winemakers for me. So, I put him to work.

Janina Doyle 00:10:01 Oh good. Well of course, right? That's amazing. So, he does the real communicating in that aspect and you just drink, taste, you know, he double checks that the wine is good enough for you and then you drink it?

Amelia Singer 00:10:13 Absolutely. Damage control.

Janina Doyle 00:10:14 Love that. Honestly, when I was in Austria, which, and I guess a lot of people don't know about and I think, you know, like we're gonna get onto the different grape varieties, but I love that you've got the Gemischter Satz and again, I am probably again butchering as English people speaking German. But again, Gemischter Satz is, yeah.

Amelia Singer 00:10:33 What do you think would Yeah, no, that that I couldn't do any better. No, I would say exactly the same.

Janina Doyle 00:10:38 Everyone listening, remember there's a transcript, but this is the field blend lines that are really cool. That's kind of, I think really coming into their own. And these are the wines that are made around Vienna, which kind of give them this little unique edge. Like there's so much, you've got these cool field blend wines. So, if anyone listening that is literally has to be made from at least three different great varieties that are planted in the same vineyard and you know, fermented together. And typically, as far as I know actually either no oak or very little oak, they're just great, amazing wines. You can literally visit all of these vineyards. You've got those lovely cool taverns that just drink that show their young delicious wine. Like you've said, you've got the opera, you've got the ballet, you've got the Sacher-Torte, that amazing chocolate cake.

Amelia Singer 00:11:28 What more can you, what more really want?

Janina Doyle 00:11:31 When I was in Vienna, I remember that I was overstimulated by the architecture. This is a thing I remember every corner we turned around and there was another beautiful fountain or building something and I was just like, I'm done. I can't, I can't do, I can't do anymore. I can't bring any more emotion. And then of course...

Amelia Singer 00:11:54 Yeah, I totally agree. Well because I was at the, um, at the beginning of the week I was in Romania and I flew into Timișoara, which is known as Baby Vienna. Because it was actually like the blueprint for Vienna. So, so many of the squares and everything, I mean it's much, much smaller. And actually it just got voted the cultural city of the year in Europe, which is great.

Janina Doyle 00:12:11 Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm

Amelia Singer 00:12:12 Timișoara was like a little dose and then suddenly you just, it's like on acid when you go to Vienna it's just, such a sensorial explosion and yeah, it's really beautiful. And the wonderful Imperial Gardens and yeah, the Hungarian architecture. And the great thing about the wine fair is this's local wine, but then they have like wines from all around the country. So actually, a real discovery for me last year was the white grape Rotgipfler.

Janina Doyle 00:12:43 Oh I love that. I mean go for it. Tell me about Rotgipfler.

Amelia Singer 00:12:47 I love, that was like my big discovery and the reason why I'm bringing it up, it sounds a bit random, but it's, it comes only from one region, the Thermenregion. And when I was at the fair, I actually bumped into one of the buyers for Waitroses. And we were both at this amazing winery store called Hartl Winery and they're based in Thermenregion. And both me and the Waitrose's buyer were both enlightened by this grape because it's actually a hybrid made from Veltliner and Traminer. And so you therefore get this wonderful perfume but with really elegant dryness and structure and you know, it can age over 50 years. It's like, and it takes to oak really well. So, you can like put like a light use of oak to it and it takes more like wonderful silky proportions. But what's also really good about it in regards to climate change, is that actually it can deal with really, really hot temperatures and still retain gorgeous, gorgeous, bright acidity. So, I actually think even though it's only like not that well known, I think it could be a real, really, really important grape for Austria in the future.

Janina Doyle 00:13:53 Okay. Why? Why do none of us know about this? I have never heard of it. You only just found out about it. I mean it, has anyone explained why this is just...

Amelia Singer 00:14:04 Well, I think they just probably drink most of it domestically. As I say. And I don't think they make a huge amount. It's not the biggest grape would be like Grüner Veltliner. And then people know about Riesling and then like from Steiermark there's like Sauvignon Blanc, there's also Morillon, their version of Chardonnay. And I think these are much easier to sell, but we're not even that important to them. They don't, a, they don't export that much anyway. And the UK is only, like the eighth most important market.

Janina Doyle 00:14:35 I know, I know the US is more important than ours. I know that they will one of the bigger markets, we are not, we are quite small in comparison, aren't we? And and so we get very little don't we?

Amelia Singer 00:14:44 Yeah. Germany doesn't get Germany probably. I don't even know if they export. The one, Rotgipfler, which I, I did see was Waitrose actually took some in. And it was like kind of an entry level. So, I think, I'm not sure if it's still there. It was for a limited time but I didn't wanna say anything so I'm not sure if it's just, they were just like tests out in the Waitrose Cellar. But the buyer was just so kind of yeah. In love with it. And I actually attended like a masterclass in the Thermenregion. That's where we found out about actually it could be a super, super important grape for Austria.

Janina Doyle 00:15:15 Okay. Everybody you heard it here first. There you go. Yeah. Amelia has brought us newsflash pay attention to the grape that I've already forgotten. Rot...

Amelia Singer 00:15:25 It's like, it's like rot, git fler. I mean it's terrible name, it's like rot as in like rot and then G I P F L E R. That probably also is why it probably doesn't sell that well.

Janina Doyle 00:15:37 Mm-hmm . I love it. Okay. Brilliant. Well okay, maybe we should get onto the other grape varieties that we do know about.

Amelia Singer 00:15:46 That which we can get hold of. Yeah.

Janina Doyle 00:15:47 Right. Okay. So, I have Grüner Veltliner with me today. I'll tell you what, I'll show you mine if you show me yours. What wine have you brought to the table today?

Amelia Singer 00:15:55 Oh my gosh. I put my wine bottle back in the fridge, but I went to Jereboams.

Janina Doyle 00:15:58 Okay. You could just, you could just tell me. Yeah. But people listening can't see us.

Amelia Singer 00:16:03 I actually got a really fantastic, I'd never tried it before. It's from winery Nastl, so spelt N A S T L. Okay. And it was £15.50. And I was like, okay cool. Like let's just see what I get. And actually, it was like when I smelt it, I immediately, I had a really complex nose that price. I've got like lots of stone fruits, what you'd expect, maybe like a little bit of white pepper. And then on the pallet you get loads of ripe quince and apple and the finish lasts for a really long time and you do get that kind of spritzy white peppery like spicy thing happening. So, no it, it's really great. I'd never heard of this winery. And then I Googled them and apparently, they've been around since 1656, like so many a while but since a while and it's still family run and like congratulations Jeroboams 'cause this is a really classy wine. And I posted it on my Instagram story being like, Hey, I'm gonna give this wine a go. And I actually already had like two Somms comment and be like, that's a really classy wine. And the the price is great.

Janina Doyle 00:17:03 Well now interesting, the one thing that you forgot to say was the grape variety. No, no, no. Was the grape variety. But...

Amelia Singer 00:17:12 Oh shoot... oh my gosh.

Janina Doyle 00:17:13 The fact is that you said white pepper, you talked about freshness I think for people, you know, give them a moment to guess, but if they don't know you hit on the exact point that it's definitely Grüner Veltliner. Right. So we both, we both. But that was fun. I No, that's good. I love that. So that just, it goes to show, I think that's why Grüner Veltliner has become Austria's signature grape variety. I mean obviously it's from Austria but it's so different isn't it that white pepper vibe.

Amelia Singer 00:17:48 I love it, because actually I really want to champion white wines from Austria. Not just Grüner, but just like in general because what I love about Austrian whites, which is quite similar to Slovenian whites, which is very similar to Hungarian whites and which was very similar to like the wines I tried in Romania is that wonderful combination of intensity of fruit combined with bright acidity which just make them delicious on their own but also so versatile and food friendly. And I'm sure that's why sommeliers love Grüner Veltliner so much.

Janina Doyle 00:18:18 Precisely 100%. And I've gone classic as well. I've got Grüner Veltliner, I was thinking do I go black, do I find Blaufränkisch? But because, and as I mentioned to you, I've got a beautiful sponsor this year who are gonna make this podcast grow because I actually am gonna have time to have, be able to give the editing to somebody else. Yay. They're amazing online retailer called Wickhams Wine and they have the Heiderer-Mayer Grüner Veltliner, so this is a 2021 vintage. And what I like about it is actually from um, Wagram, which is not as famous as some of the other regions like Wachau, you already mentioned Kamptal, and Krems... Exactly. And Kremstal. And so this is still a really good region. But what's quite nice, I always think you can get some quite good value. And I just love the freshness. And again, if you buy six wines and I mean we should always be buying six wines, shouldn't we? You get it for £13.50. If, if you want the one wine it's £15. And I, I've always, and genuinely, this is why I love Wickhams wines 'cause I really think you can get some really fantastic

Amelia Singer 00:19:27 Is that Wicker wines?

Janina Doyle 00:19:28 Wickam, Wickham.

Amelia Singer 00:19:30 Oh, Wickhams Wines. Sorry, I just wanted to clarify that. Yeah, Wickhams Wines, you know I have heard of them. They're great. Yeah.

Janina Doyle 00:19:35 Sorry, it's, it's 'cause I've already, I've literally just finished the bottle. So, we've still got a whole podcast to record. So, if everyone listening, if I stop being as coherent as normal it has been because I've been swallowing this very delicious wine. So warning, quite easy to drink.

Amelia Singer 00:19:52 Grüner Veltliner, it's low in alcohol compared to other white wine, you know. Well, I know with climate change, that is changing.

Janina Doyle 00:20:01 Okay. First of all, no this is a, it they typically often are the stuff that we get, this happens to be 13%. So actually, slightly going against the rule a little bit.

Amelia Singer 00:20:12 Oh, Wagram is slightly sunnier though, isn't it? Slightly warmer. And so it is gonna be a slightly riper style.

Janina Doyle 00:20:18 Precisely because if you get a lot of your Grüns from like Wachau, which is for me has always been the, the most it, it specializes so entirely on Grüner. But remember there they've got these, it's the, you've got obviously the Danube river running, typically most vineyards are planted on that Northern bank and they're super steep slopes, super terraced. And of course, yes. I mean obviously there's crazy diurnal there. And I think as well for that reason, I mean I'm gonna, I always say to people, we are here to educate and this is the rule, but there's always exceptions to the rule. And I mean when we think of, and I was gonna say something about Wachau, but then with Wachau you've got their specific, they have their specific rulings of the three different alcohol levels and ripeness and intensity. Right? So you know, I'm gonna keep my mouth shut. Right. So it's quite like...

Amelia Singer 00:21:21 So the one in front of me, and it's like a Smaragd. So that's like the kind of really ripe opulent one. So, it is Steinfeder, Federspiel and then the Smaragd. Yeah.

Janina Doyle 00:21:31 And they have to give you these crazy, crazy, yes, exactly. They have to give us crazy names. But of course it's a bit, once people actually know whether they're looking for Steinfeder, which has to be like under 11.5% alcohol, you've got the Federspiel that's like 11.5 to 12.5. And then you've got, which in theory, I guess if this wine was in, the Wachau region, this would be considered a Smaragd, so I've actually got a, a riper style. I've got a more kind of concentrated fruity style because those have to be above 12.5%. But it's kind of cool everyone listening. Try and remember that because actually if you want to try Grüner Veltliner and you really want to be able to have your breakfast wine, lunch wine and dinner wine. I don't know? Is that, is that what they are, Amelia?

Amelia Singer 00:22:23 Yeah, that's perfect. Yeah.

Janina Doyle 00:22:26 Right. But it, it's quite, you could look for that.

Amelia Singer 00:22:28 And actually the Steinfeder wine is what they often do in Vienna. They mix the lightest Grüner with sparkling water. Like the, well if it's like very basic kind of light Grüner Veltliner, I mean I'm not like saying from the top like wineries, but quite a lot of people do think of that as like a lunch wine and they might, you know, do a little Gemischt and like mix it. Yeah.

Janina Doyle 00:22:50 Okay, I'm not sure if I fully support that, but I do understand if it's not a super premium, it's like, but again, this is the conversation of do you put ice cubes in your wine. And I mean I

personally don't, but I'm also open to the fact that everybody's experience is personal, and they should do what, what tastes best to them. Right?

Amelia Singer 00:23:08 Absolutely.

Janina Doyle 00:23:10 But you know, I was very, very lucky I had a chat with Lenz Moser who is...

Amelia Singer 00:23:14 Oh yeah.

Janina Doyle 00:23:15 Yes. Who's uh, amazing, an amazing winemaker making wine in China now because he just can't stand still. But he was saying as well that, you know, you should be looking for that. Well, white pepper is super classic for Grüner Veltliner and obviously we, we are forgetting that you've got this incredible acidity, this is something that you're gonna get with Grüner all the time. But actually a lot of wineries now and I suppose with the development are finding ways to ripen the flavour and the white pepper is slightly becoming something that they're finding ways to diminish a little bit. So, I think you, you are always gonna get this herbal note, something green. Something like, I always sometimes get this like rocket salad note or like something a bit more bitter or dill, but it's just zing, it's crisp, it's fresh most of the time.

Amelia Singer 00:24:04 And this really good acidity. It should always be really good acidity to like balance not as high as Riesling, but that should always be there to cleanse a palate no matter how intense or ripe the fruit is. Because like yeah the fruit can go from like lemon and lime all the way up to like nectarine and quince. But there should be this acidity there to support it and that's why it ages so well. Like everyone, no one realizes that, but like I've had so many really great aged Grüner Veltliner and there is an argument to be said that it actually ages more consistently than Rieslings because I've actually, the other place where I've been, where I've tasted a lot of Austrian wine, is we go on holiday every year skiing and we always stay in this little village called Lech. And that's, we always stay at this one hotel, Hotel Arlberg. And my dad always chooses it, because it's like our one family holiday of the year and my dad loves his food and loves his wine and it's no..

Janina Doyle 00:24:59 I love him.

Amelia Singer 00:25:00 Yeah, exactly. And it's got an amazing wine cellar. So, I actually met the Gut Oggau family who make amazing, interesting, wines from Burgenland. They were staying at the hotel. But funnily enough...

Janina Doyle 00:25:02 Good timing.

Amelia Singer 00:25:03 where I've had more access to older vintages, is across the street from the hotel. There's a, I'm actually revealing all my secrets now. There's a Spa grocery Store.

Janina Doyle 00:25:18 Okay.

Amelia Singer 00:25:19 And we had made friends, my father and I, with Willy, the guy who runs the wine department, I mean it's a very posh Spa. Like they have like nice products, well I won't say posh, in just like nice premium products and it's quite a nice ski resort town. You know, he suddenly realized that we were coming every day like to kinda like see interesting wines and I'd always stock up in my wine suitcase. I bring a wine suitcase, my dad would bring a wine suitcase and it turned out that Willy's side hustle was actually to buy widows wine cellars. And these women didn't want their wine. So suddenly in

like the basement he was doing a side hustle at Spa of these like super aged, like I've got in front of me like a 2005 Knoll Smaragd Riesling. I've got 2005 Pichler Smaragd Riesling, I've got Schloss Gobelsburg from like 2004. But like this is all his...

Janina Doyle 00:26:07 Wow.

Amelia Singer 00:26:08 Side hustle. And so from doing that and from buying these older things and then comparing it to Rieslings and then I, I'd like done some like research online and things and I've talked to yeah like kind of Austrian wine lovers and experts. And there is actually an argument to be made that it is more consistent and maybe that is because of balance of intensity of fruit and acidity.

Janina Doyle 00:26:28 I can't contribute a personal experience here 'cause I haven't had any old Grüner Veltliner. But from listening to people, very often they say one, yes Grüner Veltliner is so good old. But actually then a lot of people mix it up with Chardonnay because it loses some of the white pepper tones and gets really rich and rounded. So, at the end of the day...

Amelia Singer 00:26:56 And silky

Janina Doyle 00:26:57 Right, ugh.

Amelia Singer 00:26:57 And it can take on like, it can take on like creamy, like kind of cashew nut nutty. Like it's just divine. But I don't have the willpower to buy Grüner Veltliner and put it down. So that's why it's quite helpful having Willy, have all these like widowers donating him their wares.

Janina Doyle 00:27:15 Well okay, anybody who wants to know exactly where this is, contact me or Amelia, if you contact me I'll pass you on. And she's gonna have to you promise, right promise Just that they can go there. You're gonna tell them the truth?

Amelia Singer 00:27:28 Well maybe, I mean...

Janina Doyle 00:27:31 You've said it out loud now.

Amelia Singer 00:27:31 I've revealed a huge secret. I know, I know.

Janina Doyle 00:27:35 Okay. Everybody butter up Amelia for a little bit on Instagram and then see.

Amelia Singer 00:27:39 Yeah, I might, I might. Everyone has a price.

Janina Doyle 00:27:44 Oh, okay. But I mean already we're talking I, I should I realized, sorry, I should probably say something about my Grüner Veltliner. It's also family run. It's been around for a while. Since like 1844 as well. And I mean you just, yeah you get the touch of pepper, little bit of herb, super fresh, little bit mineral, nice citric notes, this kind of sweet apple note. Great done. Medium body. We're good. It's yummy. Go get it. But we're both getting excited about this Austrian wines business. But for anybody who hasn't really experienced Austrian wine with your going white or reds, it's just fresh, food friendly, great acidity and really fresh wines like loads of the reds as well can be chilled down. They have Yeah. Just the summer vibes. Right.

Amelia Singer 00:28:30 Well I think also when you think back, like you can never really think about wine without the food traditions alongside. And when I think back when, like what my grandparents used to make for us every Sunday it was all like very hearty, continental fair, like paprika chicken and goulash. And then some you'll have like pickles things and you know, it's, it's very, very heavy and like

potato we, you know, it's, it is not light. So actually these wines are so amazing because they do have all that flavour but then the acidity absolutely cuts through all of that and just compliments it perfectly. So even with the reds, as you say, like it could be like really dark and plummy fruit, but they'll still be like some black pepper elements and some lovely perfume.

Janina Doyle 00:29:15 Yes. I was just, you, you are so right. Funny enough, we talk about Grüner Veltliner and we say a bit of white pepper and that's really distinctive with all of the three main red grape varieties, which I think we'll touch on in a second. They all seem to carry very often a bit of a more of a black pepper. Of course, not white, but a bit of a peppery spicy tone to them. Right. All of them. All quite fascinating.

Amelia Singer 00:29:37 And they're all coquettish, that's what I like about it. Sometimes they, Blaufränkisch or whatever, sometimes like you need to age it a bit before it'll open up. But all of them, if you allow them to do that, have like a lot of intensity. Great acidity. But then unlike Italian wines, the tannins are a bit softer.

Janina Doyle 00:29:56 Aren't they! Zweigelt is the grape variety that is most planted. But Zweigelt is actually a crossing of the other two grape varieties: Blaufränkisch and Sankt Laurent. Or actually I don't think you're supposed to say 'Saint Laurent', that's the French way. It's Sankt Laurent. Anyway.

Amelia Singer 00:30:15 Yeah. It's a mix up that.

Janina Doyle 00:30:15 We keep on ruining it by saying it's the French way, but which grape variety do we start with first? I mean, do you have a preference? Do you have a go-to if you were to pick a red grape of Austria?

Amelia Singer 00:30:28 I mean we could go from like lightest to medium to biggest. So like lightest would be the Sankt Laurent. I guess because like that's actually related to Pinot family.

Janina Doyle 00:30:38 But nobody knows.

Amelia Singer 00:30:39 And it tends to be quite, like dark.

Janina Doyle 00:30:40 Yeah. But it's so annoying with all the history. It's like it's related to Pinot. Maybe it came from, like some pinot seed, maybe, we don't know. Unknown origin. I have Googled so much this grape variety.

Amelia Singer 00:30:56 I know, like there's a whole mystery around it.

Janina Doyle 00:30:58 Right.

Amelia Singer 00:30:59 And I, I mean again I can kind of see it's, it's, it can also be like a beefier version of pinot because you do get very light wine. My dad for ages didn't like it. He's like, uh, this is too light. And then I forced him when we actually went to like the Vienna wine fair, I forced him to attend a masterclass on Sankt Laurent because I'm like, look, I know that of course it's like the raspberry, the blackberry like pomegranate fruit. Yeah. But actually, it takes very well to oak and my dad needs like a little bit of body. So, what's quite interesting is like, yeah, it's, it's juicy. It's like velvety whatever. But in the right hands you can get kind of like a beefier version of pinot noir. Not I'm gonna desecrate my other heritage, which is America right now. I sometimes don't like how Californians handle pinot noir because they just shove it and oak and they treat, treat it like a cab, but in the right hands. And just again,

because it's Europe, like this Sankt Laurent, if it has been adeptly put into oak, then you do get really gorgeous. Yeah. You get the softer tannins. It's really juicy. It's velvet tin is a slightly beefier version of Pinot. So, for example, the Sankt Laurent, which really converted my father to that grape variety is Umathum. Which is important into the UK by Clark Foyster. And yeah, I think it's about, I was like writing down notes like that's £26. I think even in Waitrose actually there's a Sankt Laurent, for £14 in Waitrose's wine cellar. And again, that from the description, I haven't tried it, but they're talking like spices and a little bit of vanilla. So that would, I would say like is like the beefier version. But then you can have like very stripped back kind of perky bright ones, you know, with, with minimal intervention from um, Schneider. But which Newcomer wines is actually a great one if you want more of like the funkier, minimalistic approach. But no, it's a really fun grape and yes it is related to pinot but it, it can sometimes have a bit more oomph depending on the producer.

Janina Doyle 00:32:48 I think that's a perfect summary. It's like pinot noir but oomphier. And you might even find with a, along with the red fruit, there could be a hint of some sort of spice. But okay, so then we go to Zweigelt, which is actually the most planted red. And again, I dunno, there's a pinot vibe with that as well. I mean for me there is this silky, velvety tannins you. It's really bright, it's vibrant, it's fruity. This one for me is my favorite one. If I was gonna chill of the three, I think can be really, really nice. A little bit colder and drunk.

Amelia Singer 00:33:25 It's a really good picnic red.

Janina Doyle 00:33:27 Yeah, Oh that's the word.

Amelia Singer 00:33:29 Yeah, it's a really good like, and then just sometimes like there's more morello cherry like comes up. I get like a lot of like kind of cherry fruits with it. You can sometimes get licorice as well as the black pepper, which I really like. I kind of see it, it's funny, I've had like some Zweigelt again, I think it's quite a capricious grape. Like you have to be quite careful because it's prone to high fertility. So, you know, in the right hands it's awesome. But it can sometimes just be quite briary and like a bit of the crazy, I, I always think of it as the middle child, like outta the family. It's like Blaufränkisch and Sankt Laurent at the bottom when they kind of created this like kind of middle child but made in the right hands. And again, I would say Umathum is, is amazing. You can get that from Clark Foyster's. There's also, actually I saw that at M&S, I really now wanna go to M&S. It's part of their Found range.

Janina Doyle 00:34:21 Really? My, oh my god, okay this is how much?

Amelia Singer 00:34:25 £7.50. Because no one knows what it is.

Janina Doyle 00:34:28 Now that's brilliant. I mean just taking a side note, you went to Romania, and you went to Cramele Recas. They have literally for about seven pounds, one of their white wines from Cramele Recas, which I think is seven pounds. Super aromatic, the Feteasca Regala, I mean my god, M&S and their like discovery range. It's really for those of you in the UK, sorry, everyone else that's not listening and isn't in the UK, but for those of you that are Yeah, that's a really good, it genuinely is a good discovery range, isn't it? Okay, via M&S, interesting.

Amelia Singer 00:35:02 Yeah. And I think the Umathum, one is like 26. So that's the thing. It's like you can have an entry point at M&S, and then you can like work yourself up to about like 20 pounds from the Hallebuhl. That's like the name of the site, Umathum. And that's available from Clark Foyster.

And like that I would say is like classic, classic. Like if you want a really serious producer. If you paid £20 for the one from Umathum, that's that. But yeah, I think it's so great that M&S have one on their range.

Janina Doyle 00:35:31 Love that. Well done you guys now. Okay. Blaufränkisch to finish off with. So, this is, I mean the fullest bodied, the richest or the slightly darkest fruited. But even then, we are not talking about a banger. We are not talking about powerful. It might have a bit of a chocolatey, spiced to the berry fruit, but even with the most tannins...

Amelia Singer 00:35:56 Yeah, it does have the most tannins I would say. Like it's sometimes worth holding onto if it's a serious producer. But you are right. Even then it's still not crazy. And like what I love about is you tend to get like this like dried herbal element too. Particularly if you hold onto it and there's really good acidity there. Sometimes the tannins are quite dense, but again, it's so age worthy. So, if you can hold on for it for like 2, 3, 4 years, great. But I think, I think a big problem for it is that it's dwarfed by Hungary in terms of its production like I just discovered today. Because I was like, yeah, why isn't it like more popular? You know? And apparently in Austria there's 2437 hectares of it. Versus in Hungary there's 8,000 hectares of it. So, I dunno if that's like part of the issue. But um...

Janina Doyle 00:36:46 And if everyone listening, if you, when we talk about the same grape variety, that's Kékfrankos in Hungary. So, it does have a different name.

Amelia Singer 00:36:54 Thank you. Yeah, it does have a different name.

Janina Doyle 00:36:56 But still maybe, I don't know, it's difficult 'cause sometimes I forget because being in the wine industry for such a long time and then just knowing about wines, I don't remember what I ever discovered first or you know, so sometimes it, I don't know whether everyone listening let me know. Have, have you heard of Kékfrankos? Have you heard of Blaufränkisch? They are the same. I think it's also called Lemberger in Germany just to...

Amelia Singer 00:37:21 Yes, it is.

Janina Doyle 00:37:22 Just to confuse everybody, but don't worry, ignore the German one. Sorry if anyone's German and listening, but like I've not found one of them, in in England. I think we're all right over here, aren't we, right?

Amelia Singer 00:37:35 I mean they're like, I mean at least with Blaufränkisch I did see it was like available at Berry Brothers, Clark Foister's, Lea & Wheeler, Moric, M O R I C is a fantastic producer. Really aromatic, spicy, dark mould plums, like freaking love Moric. And then actually even at like Hedonism, I saw they had like Prieler for £20. And Prieler is like a really solid solid producer. So again, they're not crazily expensive 'cause not that many people know about them. So even if the producers are biodynamic or all organic or whatever have been around for decades, I think actually Austrian wines, particularly the Reds, 'cause they're not so appreciated, Grüner's are getting more expensive because people are starting to realize how freaking awesome, they are. But you can make some real steals on the Reds.

Janina Doyle 00:38:25 And I do think, yeah, anyway, you need to be paying at least 10 pounds to get something decent from Austria. But it's not like Burgundy, which is outpriced itself. It's not like Bordeaux. I think anything between the 10- and 20-pound range, you can find some absolute, beautiful, beautiful examples. And also I think this what we talked about acidity, we talked about freshness,

brightness of fruit. What we haven't said is why, which is everybody, if you think about where this is, I mean we are talking the same kind of latitude as Burgundy, but whereas Burgundy still has some influence of actually even the ocean because it has some sea close to it. This is landlocked and it's super, super continental. So, you've got the really warm summers, but then there's super, super cold winters. And actually, we haven't mentioned, Amelia about like everyone thinks of like skiing in the Alps maybe, but it's like, yeah, none of the grapes are grown in the Alps. We are talking the east, every wine region we're talking about is in the east. And okay, so we've mentioned, okay, we've mentioned the Grüner Veltliner, that grape from Wachau and Kamptal, and Kremstal, which is gonna be more in the northern part compared...

Amelia Singer 00:39:34 North-East, yeah

Janina Doyle 00:39:35 Exactly, of compared to Vienna. But then all these reds that we're talking about that are fantastic...

Amelia Singer 00:39:40 In the Burgenland. Yeah.

Janina Doyle 00:39:42 Precisely.

Amelia Singer 00:39:43 Or Carnuntum too. Yeah.

Janina Doyle 00:39:44 Oh well, precisely. And I think...

Amelia Singer 00:39:46 And Styria. Styria, I really wanna go to Styria, which is right at the south. And that's like where it'll be like, Sauvignon Blanc and Morillon comes from. But we don't really get anything from there.

Janina Doyle 00:39:56 I don't think any of that comes into the UK and Sauvignon Blanc apparently is showing these really smoky, more mineral tones. And in general, the whites from Styria are a lot more aromatic, there's lots of aromatics.

Amelia Singer 00:40:10 Really aromatic.

Janina Doyle 00:40:11 And I think.

Amelia Singer 00:40:12 It's not like a much more Mediterranean vibe there too. From what I've heard from people, it just like, it almost sounds like a different country. Like, I mean it's fascinating. But then again what you realize, just me being in Romania and from the vineyards at Cramele Recas, I could see Hungary, I could see Serbia, I could see the mist on the Carpathian Mountains, and you suddenly realize how arbitrary all these borders are, you know?

Janina Doyle 00:40:36 Yeah, yeah. Precisely. And then we talk about like, this is Austria, but all of the effects of the Pannonian Plains. So, this is why when you go down into the southeast part, which is why that's where the reds are growing. They've got all that heat coming in from the Pannonian Plains and that's why it's, Ah, okay. Right before we finish this episode, we've already, I mean, do you not feel excited? Do you think it's a girl's trip to Austria soon? We might need to go.

Amelia Singer 00:41:03 I have to go. There's many places I wanna go. And you can get to the Wachau so easily from Vienna too. Like it's so easy.

Janina Doyle 00:41:10 Precisely. But one thing we haven't talked about again is the sweet wines as well. Because when we talk about in Burgenland, there is this lake, Lake Neusiedl, which is also right, which is also a wine region. But what I found fascinating when I was studying was that this is so, so shallow. This lake is like one meter, one meter, is it one meter? I feel like it's really, really shallow and because it's so shallow it the, it's incredible for creating with the wine regions near it, Botrytis. So the noble rot, the fungus, the good fungus that we like, that's going to dry up the grapes. I actually literally talked about Botrytis on my episode before this one. So, anybody who is listening going, what the hell is Botrytis? I literally just explained it. So, if you haven't heard the episode before, go back. But yeah. And so in Rust, in Rust, which is within this region, they do amazing Botrytised sweet wine that you know, so I'm just like, do we not need to all, just as we're talking, I'm like, there is so much good wine in Austria and it's, and actually we generally, you and I, you know, we know the prices of Sauternes, the Botrytised sweet wine in France and, and really good versions in in Hungary. Tokaji and Tokaji has become super, super famous. But actually again, really good value are exactly like for instance from here.

Amelia Singer 00:42:34 Well, and also I must assume admit, I know this is not Austria, but when I was in Romania earlier this week, a huge shock was the amazing barrel fermented Sauvignon Blanc dessert wine from Cramele Recas, which was only seven quid for like half a bottle. And I'm not gonna say which wine buyer, but there was a wine buyer who has several wine bars in London and he's like, gimme that. Like, yeah.

Janina Doyle 00:42:57 Well, Amelia, as you know, I've also visited Cramele Recas. And also, for anyone who's listening now who's not listened, go back and search this. If you wanna know about Wines of Romania, because I did a podcast with them because I genuinely think, I mean Austria, everyone do get involved and try, 'cause Austria is so exciting. But I do still think that these could, Romanian wines may well be the very best value wines I've tasted in the world.

Amelia Singer 00:43:23 Me too. Yeah. Me too and so exciting.

Janina Doyle 00:43:26 So hang on.

Amelia Singer 00:43:27 But we need another podcast to talk about it.

Janina Doyle 00:43:33 Are we, are we...

Amelia Singer 00:43:35 You've already done it. You've actually, you've already actually done it justice. Your podcast on, well the two podcasts, you did on Cramele Recas were incredible.

Janina Doyle 00:43:37 Oh, thank you.

Amelia Singer 00:43:38 Very helpful research before I went out.

Janina Doyle 00:43:39 Oh, you're very welcome. But now my question to you is, are we happy to conclude the Austrian episode? Having said that Romanian wine is the best value in the world?

Amelia Singer 00:43:50 Well, okay. I think...Value. But I still think like in terms of like more premium wines, wines with ageability, wines with real character, Austria can absolutely offer that in the Reds. But I also just think the whites are some of the most exciting, enticing, food friendly. And actually, in terms of their history, quite frankly, like the, the price to, to value ratio is it's justified. It's not the cheapest wine in the world, but it's, it will give you absolutely guaranteed pleasure.

Janina Doyle 00:44:31 So I hope now you are inspired to drink more Austrian wine or in fact fly to Vienna. Enjoy the classical music, the operas, the ballets, take a boat down the Danube or enjoy some of the thermal spas. If you are planning to go to Kamptal, which is just one hour to the west of Vienna. On my bucket list when I go to Austria next, I want to stay at the LOISIUM Wine & Spa Hotel. It's bang in the middle of the vineyards. It's in the town of Langenlois. So, check that out. And as always, I finish off with a wine quote. I wanted one that showcases wine's cultural significance at its timeless appeal. And so, Ernest Hemmingway said it best, when he said:

“Wine is the most civilized thing in the world”.

And so that leads me onto part two, which is coming out next week with Amelia, where we are touching on a bit more of the wine stories and her own personal wine experiences and taking it a little bit further than just the simple enjoyment of wine. So, I'll see you back here next week. If you're loving these episodes, please do take just two seconds to leave a review or a rating on your podcast app, as it massively makes the podcast far more discoverable. And we need to get people more excited about Austrian wine. So, raising my glass of Grüner Veltliner to you all until next week, cheers to you.